

## **Transcription of Anna L. Lee Interview**

**Interviewer: Penny Grande**

**Interviewee: Anna L. Lee**

**Short Summary:** Anna L. Lee, interviewed by Penny Grande on July 15th, 2004 at Parkside High School in connection with the Teaching American History Credit of the Wicomico County Board of Education. Anna Lee worked as a teacher for 22 years at Bennett Middle School and Wicomico Middle School, and has served for 15 years as an administrator. Lee details her life through memories of segregation and limited opportunities, and describes the differences in education from her childhood to today.

**Grande:** Tuesday, July 15th 2004, and this is the start of an interview with Anna Lee at Parkside High School where she works in Wicomico County, Maryland. This interview is done in connection with the Teaching American History Credit of the Wicomico County Board of Education. My name is Penny Grande, and I'll be the interviewer. Alright, what is your full name?

**Lee:** My name is Anna Lee Lee.

**Grande:** Where were you born, and when?

**Lee:** I was born in Salisbury, Maryland. August 4th, 1944. I actually lived in Fruitland, Maryland, but I was born in the hospital here in Salisbury.

**Grande:** Do you remember hearing your grandparents or parents describe their lives, and what did they say?

**Lee:** I'll start with my grandmother. My grandmother was a laborer. She also worked in houses, people's houses as maids. She cleaned for them. She worked on a farm. I remember her working for a Perdue family in Fruitland, Maryland. I don't think it was [inaudible] Perdue, but I think they were related. She pretty much cleaned and cooked and she also worked on the farm as a laborer, doing plants during planting season, she worked. She pretty much taught us to value the work ethic. She lived to be a good ripe age of 104 when she died. My mother also worked as a laborer. She worked in people's houses for a while. She worked on farms. I can remember picking beans and digging potatoes, and she took us with her a lot of times to do that kind of work. I used to remember and wonder why as a kid we would eat dinner so late at night, and I realized that it was because they had to wait to get the money to buy the food each day. They

worked in the fields, and they got the money each day, and they bought the food each day at that point.

Also, coming into play was the fact that we didn't have electricity at the time, and the only means of refrigeration was a big block of ice in an ice box. So they couldn't keep a lot of food around over weeks like we do today. We can do that and we keep food for months now, but we couldn't do that at that point because there was no sufficient means of refrigeration. But I think overall, my parents taught us that you have to work for what you get. You have to work for what you get, that no one's gonna give us anything. And I think that's been a valuable lesson for all of us. I was born in a family of 6 children. I was the youngest, so we're all getting on in age now. But we had food, and we had a place to stay.

**Grande:** Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics or issues relating to segregation?

**Lee:** Yes, I think I remember, I guess what I can remember the best I guess, is that our parents seemed fearful of any type of relationship, especially that black men may have with white women. I remember hearing my father and some uncles talk about how some black men were [inaudible] because of their relationship with white women. It pretty much came out to be a very fearful type of event. As far as worldwide events are concerned, no. I don't think that they actually had that as a focus at the time, because they were too concerned with surviving and feeding all of us, because they didn't get into worldwide events, but things that were happening locally, I just remember believing that they were in a lot of fear.

**Grande:** Are you aware of anything that your father or uncles or any black men would've done to avoid any type of misinterpretation about his association with white women?

**Lee:** Yes, I remember hearing them say and talk about how they would either run the other way, or they would not stand to stare at anyone, or they would go on the other side of the street. Also, I do remember occasionally where they said, especially there was a night spot one time, I remember them talking about this place where they used to go and dance and play games or whatever the adults used to go and do during that time. And there were certain white women who used to [inaudible] them, there were some white women who used to come and join them, so they all weren't enemies, you know? But they were fearful that they were in the place, because they were fearful that somebody would come by, you know occasionally maybe a policeman would come by during that time and raid the place sometimes dependant upon whatever it was that they did. But they were fearful that they would find white women there, because they were afraid that they would be accused of wanting to have some type of relationship with them, although it was the white women who came by choice there, but they tried to get them out of there because they didn't want to be accused of having a relationship with them. Now some of

them may have had a relationship I don't know, but that was one of the things that they would try to do, so everything had to be done in secret.

**Grande:** How is the world now different from when it was when you were a child? Just give me an overview. It doesn't have to be too detailed.

**Lee:** Okay. Well I see the world now vastly different. There are more opportunities for young people to become educated. There are more opportunities for black people to have things that they never dreamed of having before. I'm not saying everything is perfect, because it isn't, but I think the changes that have come about are positive changes, for the most part. It took a long time to get there since the Civil Rights Movement, and the Civil Rights Act came about, in what, 1954? What is it '64? '64. But things are different, but it did take a long time for them to actually come around and make sure that things are where they are today. But I would say overall that I have seen great changes.

**Grande:** What schools did you attend from elementary to high school? What was your perception of these schools?

**Lee:** Starting out, I attended Fruitland Elementary School, which is on Mar Street in Fruitland. As I look back, I don't know how they could've had children in those schools. It was a 3 room school. We had 2 classes in one room. There was no inside bathroom, there was an outside toilet in the back there. I remember seeing a wood stove in the corner of the room. They usually kept it warm for the most part. There was no cafeteria there, somebody came by and provided boxes of milk, so everyone had to bring their lunch there. The elementary school, I did remember having fun there, but I don't know if any white elementary schools had outside bathrooms during the same period that I was in elementary school. So I stayed at Fruitland elementary from Grades 1 through the middle of Grade 5. Then we moved to Salisbury, and it went to Salisbury Elementary School, which at that point still had up there the colored high school on the top of it. I stayed there from the middle of 5th grade and 6th grade. We did have inside bathrooms in Salisbury, so I don't know if the outside bathrooms were just a Fruitland thing, but it was still a County, properly that they had. So I did have bathrooms there.

After I got out of the 6th grade, went to 7th grade, went over to Salisbury High School. I would have to say that Salisbury High School was a very nice school, at least my perception was that it was a very nice school. It housed grades 7 through 12. I remember thinking that it was a beautiful school. It had a nice gym, and it had a cafeteria. I remember the big water fountain in the cafeteria, we used to go wash our hands in it. I really felt that I had a good time at Salisbury High School, I have good memories at that school. I don't know whether our books were [inaudible] or not, I really don't recall that. Whether they were, they were new to me so I didn't know any different. But I had a successful time at Salisbury High School.

**Grande:** How did you get to school?

**Lee:** Oh that's a good question. [Laughs]. I walked! We walked. Elementary school it wasn't too bad, we didn't have too far to walk in elementary school. I came to Salisbury, I walked from Patrick Avenue, and that's over near where Salisbury Middle School is now, a little bit past Salisbury Middle, and walked up to where [Chipman] is, so that was a good walk. When I went to High School, I had a longer walk. We walked from Fitzwater Street, which is down maybe where Brew River is right now, all the way to where Salisbury Middle School is. So that's about almost two miles one way. So we walked there in the morning and walked back in the afternoon, so we had a good walk.

**Grande:** Do you recall hearing about the Brown v. Board of Education decision when it was decided, and what was your reaction?

**Lee:** Well, I don't recall that at the time when it happened, because I guess I was probably too young or either I wasn't paying attention to events at that time. I did know when I saw these students trying to go into the high schools, trying to go into the schools, where they were being blocked, and they were being beaten because they were trying to integrate the schools, and that should not happen to any human being.

**Grande:** What was the funniest thing you remember as a child?

**Lee:** Gosh, the funniest thing that I remember. What do you mean like funny?

**Grande:** [Inaudible response]

**Lee:** [Laughs]. Well I guess one of the funniest things that I remember, I guess it wasn't fun to the person to whom it happened, but we were in elementary school, all of the kids thought it was funny when we had a girl that almost fall down the outside toilet. [Chuckles]. It wasn't funny to her but everybody else laughed. Luckily she was rescued, thank goodness.

**Grande:** [Chuckles]. Okay, what was the saddest thing you remember as a child?

**Lee:** Other than the deaths of family members, you have things like that. I don't remember anything that was sad. I remember things that were disturbing, but not necessarily really sad.

**Grande:** What made you the maddest, or the most disturbed as a child?

**Lee:** I guess, things that, I guess seeing my parents really struggle. Struggle for money, struggle for food, struggle for things that they needed to have for the family. There were things that I wanted but I couldn't have, and I didn't understand why I couldn't have them, now I do understand that. But I think that's what disturbed me the most.

**Grande:** Can you describe your hospital experience as a child?

**Lee:** Yes, I certainly can. When I was 5 years old, I had a disease, a kidney disease called Bright's disease. According to my mother, when she went to work out in the fields everyday, I would be fine, and when she got home, my brothers and sisters would say that I had swollen up really badly, but by the time my mother got home the swelling would have gone down. So when I first get up out of bed the swelling would be there, but they would have gone at like 5 o'clock in the morning so they would not be able to see that. So that happened for a while, so my mother said that she stayed home one day to see what they were talking about. And low and behold, I swole up. Everything swole up. So she took me to a doctor here in Salisbury, we lived in Fruitland then. He said "Don't take that child home if you want her to live, take her directly to the hospital because her kidneys are failing".

She took me to the hospital, and I remember them putting me on what they call a Ward, which is a big room, like an Army Barracks where you had many many beds in there. But this was the black Ward, so it was segregated in the hospital. They had a black Ward, and some of the white people had some private rooms, any private rooms, I don't know whether they had a big Ward for any white people or not, but I know that they had a black Ward for all black [inaudible] regardless of age. So at 5 years old, I was put in this Ward with all of the other black women who had various diseases, whatever they had. I remember getting up to go to the bathroom, and the first time I've ever seen an old black woman, she was old, old, old. Very wrinkled. She was smoking a pipe, they could actually smoke in the hospital, they could actually smoke in the hospital! She was smoking a pipe, I ran out of there yelling and screaming back to my bed, and when the doctor came in to see me, it was a white doctor, he's dead now so I'm not going to name him. He said "some changes have to be made". He said "I'm taking this child out of here" out of this Ward here. "I'm putting her in the nursery with the other children", and he put me in the Ward with the other children, white children, black children were in there.

That's when I was moved, and I can remember being there in the children's Ward which was nice and beautifully decorated for the children, it was really pretty. I remember my mother coming in, she would read books to me, and I would pretend that I was sweating because it was so hot, but I would be crying she wouldn't leave me. I would tell her "Read some more, read some more, read some more". So I wouldn't let her stop reading because I was trying to keep her there as much as possible. That was a traumatic experience, and I actually stayed in there for about 3 months, until all of the swelling went down. When I was in High School, I had an

occasion to work at the hospital after school, and I helped carry meals to patients and that type of thing, and I happened to see a child with the same disease and it is very frightening. And they have to stay there for a long period of time until they extract all the fluid from their body, the excess fluid that was there. So that was maybe the most traumatic experience in my life.

**Grande:** When did you first become aware that there were two types of schools? One for whites and one for blacks. Are there any events that trigger this memory?

**Lee:** I guess it probably wasn't until I got into High School that I realized that. In elementary school, I was going to school and it didn't make any difference to me, I thought that was the norm, I didn't know any better. But when I got to the high school I realized that there were separate schools, because at Salisbury High School, we didn't have an adequate football field, so occasionally, they would allow our boys to go over and use what they called the Bowl at the time, and that was a big [inaudible] in the ground, it was a Stadium on Wi Middle's [Wicomico Middle School] property. It had bleachers and everything there for an adequate football game.

**Grande:** [Inaudible question].

**Lee:** It was Wi High then, yes. But it was where Wi Middle presently is. But it was called the Bowl, and so I'm looking at this school, and I'm like okay they have a lot of things that maybe we don't have. We don't have a big field like that. Although we had a field out back to play on, but it was nothing with seats in it where people could come out and sit and actually watch a football game.

**Grande:** Do you have any experiences besides the hospital incidence that made you aware of your segregated surroundings?

**Lee:** Oh yes, a lot of them. Anywhere you went, everywhere you went, before 1965, things were segregated. In Salisbury anyway, I don't know about other places. The bathrooms downtown, and at the courthouse no less, were marked white and colored. Water fountains were marked whites and colored, down at the bathrooms. When we went to the movie, all blacks had to sit up in the balcony. Now I don't know what the reason was behind it. I knew they were segregated so we had to sit up in the balcony. Only to find out later on that's the best view. [Chuckles]. We were not allowed to sit where we wanted to sit, we had to go up and sit in the balcony. In restaurants, when we went to buy food at a restaurant if we wanted to get something we had to go around the back door, and they handed it to you through a little window out in the back door. You were paying the same money for the same thing, but you couldn't go inside and sit down and eat. Those were some of the areas that I know that were segregated.

**Grande:** What was your opinion of Wicomico Senior High School compared to your school Salisbury High School? Did you think that they were equal?

**Lee:** Well I actually - do you mean at the time that I was attending it? I didn't know a difference because I had never been to Wi Senior High, other than the football field I had never been there so I really did not know a difference.

**Grande:** What things made you think that you were or weren't [inaudible].

**Lee:** Okay, you mean while I was in High School or any time? Any time? Okay. I guess we were going downtown, and we were going to what they called 10 set stores there. One of them was [inaudible], and [inaudible] drug store I remember, it used to be down on the plaza. There were lunch counters, I used to wash dishes there, but I couldn't go there and sit and eat anything. I could wash dishes, but I couldn't sit at the counter and eat anything at all. No blacks could downtown. And that was throughout wherever you went, that you knew that you were not being treated equally.

**Grande:** Did your school have a cafeteria?

**Lee:** Yes it did have a cafeteria. I remember the big water fountain and we had to go wash our hands. Yes it had a cafeteria.

**Grande:** Did your school have a cafeteria or/and custodial staff?

**Lee:** Yes they had both at Salisbury High, I do remember that they had both of those.

**Grande:** And do you remember the conditions of your textbooks at all? I remember early on you said you did not.

**Lee:** No I really don't remember the condition of them when we got them. I don't recall that.

**Grande:** On your walks to school, did you pass any other schools, white schools on your way?

**Lee:** No, because where I lived, it was considered then to be the colored section of town. And everything over there was pretty much black people. So when I walked into High School I passed Salisbury Elementary and then got to Salisbury High School but no I didn't pass any other schools.

**Grande:** No busses to pick you up, to transport you?

**Lee:** No, not one, no. We walked the whole time.

**Grande:** Did you have any friends or associates that went to the white school?

**Lee:** No.

**Grande:** Did you live in a segregated part of town?

**Lee:** Yes, I lived in a segregated part of town. When I was in elementary school, we lived over on Patrick Avenue, and at that time, the places were fairly new, they were apartments, and the area was not bad at that point. We moved from there and we moved to Fitzwater Street, and on Fitzwater Street, at that time when we moved there, actually there were mostly white people living there. My sister was able to get a house for all of us, and we were one of the first black families that moved on Fitzwater Street, almost across from where Brew River is right now. It was a nice neighborhood, then later my sister stayed there and my mother and the rest of us moved to another house not far from there, and that was a very good neighborhood when I was in High School.

**Grande:** Do you recall hearing about integration of Wicomico County Schools? Were you still in town? Were you in college? What was your feeling about how Wicomico County had integrated? Was it too fast? Too slow? Only one-sided? Too one-sided? Etc.

**Lee:** To my knowledge, I don't think that Wicomico County Schools integrated as quickly as they were supposed to, to my knowledge. I do remember when they integrated, I was in college. They integrated, I believe it was in 1965, '66, somewhere in that area. I was in college at that point. I remember them talking about some riots taking place in town when it did happen. I remember specifically that they had sort of a lockdown, a curfew because of some riots that were taking place, and they called the National Guard, and the National Guard only guarded over in the black section of town during that time. After a certain time we couldn't go out of the house.

**Grande:** [Inaudible response].

**Lee:** Oh yes, oh yes. We could not go out of the house. You wanted to go to the store or something like that you couldn't go because the guards were walking the streets.

**Random Voice:** So the feeling is the violence came from the blacks?

**Lee:** That was the feeling.

**Random Voice:** It wasn't two sided.



**Lee:** That was the feeling, it came from the black section, right.

**Grande:** Where did you go to college? Was it segregated? And any experiences in college concerning segregation and integration?

**Lee:** I went to Maryland State College in Princess Anne Maryland, and it was segregated for the most part. There were a couple of whites that went there, and I did remember the students there wanting to go Uptown, so they called Uptown Princess Anne to eat at a restaurant up at the Washington Hotel, I remember that specifically. There was a riot that broke out because they didn't want them in that particular hotel anywhere to sit down at the lunch counter to eat or whatever. I specifically remember them being at the top of the hill, where there was a railroad track there, and they brought out a fire engine that hosed down the kids to keep them from coming up the hill to go into the Washington Hotel. They turned the fire hoses on them, they turned the dogs on them, I remember a girl being severely being bitten by police dogs during that time. It was not a good experience, I'll tell you that. It was not a good experience. So it was segregated, there were things being done to keep blacks from sitting at white counters and eating the food. Although they could go into any stores there and spend their money. And of course a lot of the students down there were from Baltimore, from other areas where it was probably a little more open than it was down here in Wicomico and Somerset County. So they were afraid to go up and sit at the counter and try to integrate the counters. But it was a learning experience and I think it was a devastating experience.

**Grande:** Were you and your brothers and sisters the first generation of course to attend college or have the opportunities to attend college?

**Lee:** Yes. I don't recall any other kids on my mother's side of the family or my father's side of the family that was in college. My one brother started going to college, actually he's my second oldest brother, starting going to college and then the rest of us followed. We all graduated, the five of us graduated from Maryland State College. My oldest brother left and went to New York early in his life, and he graduated from a college in New York, in Brooklyn. But we all went there, we actually had no transportation to get down to Princess Anne, for the most part. I remember standing on the corner, thumbing a ride to Princess Anne, every day just about. Winter, Spring, Fall, whatever, and I pretty much did that for 3 years. The last year I actually got a ride with a lady who was going down there so I had several regular rides. So we would all stand on the corner, and we knew some teachers who were teaching at Maryland State, we knew they would come by that corner. [Inaudible] we would have some cars, but my family didn't have any cars. My father never drove. My mother only got a car when she was in her 60s to go to church. So we had no dependable transportation to get back and forth to college. So I remember one of my brothers and I and a couple of other kids stood on that corner everyday. It's right

where the bridge is now where the old Salmons Store used to be downtown. We found a ride there, and we found a ride back home just about everyday because we knew somebody was coming. Some days once we got down there we were able to catch the railway bus back to the railway station here in Salisbury which is near where Wi Middle is right now, and we would walk from there down Fitzwater Street back home to go to college. It was a hard thing to do, but overall it was worth it.

**Grande:** Was your parents having difficulty paying for the college? In terms of you having six brothers and sisters and you have so many going to college. Was it difficult for them to finance all of that?

**Lee:** Actually, they didn't have to finance a whole lot because during that time thank goodness, they had what they called the Teacher's Plan in Maryland, and all you had to do is teach in Maryland 2 years after you graduated. They paid your tuition, you got some money for books, they didn't do anything with transportation or anything like that. But you only had to teach in Maryland for 2 years after that. This is my 37th year so I think I got my money's worth out of it [chuckles].

**Grande:** So you became a Wicomico County employee after you graduated from college?

**Lee:** Yes, I started my student teaching over at Wi Middle, and that was another thing too, when you talk about the differences in the time periods, and how you see changes coming about. When I did my student teaching over at Wi Middle in 1967, I was interviewed by the Assistant Superintendent of Schools to find out how I felt about teaching white and black kids together. Now, I'm not sure that they even know [inaudible], they don't interview them. They don't even come out to see them I don't think but they leave that up to the supervisors and the principals, but the Assistant Superintendent of Schools interviewed me before I was allowed to do my student teaching at Wi Middle. I taught at [inaudible] Middle, and now I'm here at Parkside, and I've been here ever since.

**Grande:** So as a Wicomico County employee, have you ever faced any discrimination, segregation, as an employee or teacher, or anything of that matter?

**Lee:** I'm not sure -

**Grande:** Wi Middle was integrated by the time you had entered the teaching profession.

**Lee:** Oh yes. I did my student teaching at Wi Middle but I didn't teach there. I taught at Bennett Middle, which was Bennett Junior then. I came there the second year that the school was open. I really don't recall any of the problems that they said that they were having, at least I didn't see

them in the school at the time. They had already had a year to work things out by the time that I got there.

**Grande:** What was the staff ratio? In terms of black vs. white.

**Lee:** It was mostly white. A lot of the teachers who had taught at Salisbury High School when they integrated the schools and bussed kids across town to Bennett Middle, Bennett Junior, a lot of those teachers were transferred over to Bennett Junior, a lot of them were. When I got there, a lot of the teachers that I had at Salisbury High School were teaching at Bennett Junior when I got there.

**Grande:** What would be your opinion if you heard that in the [inaudible] brief to the Supreme Court Maryland claimed it made great efforts in 1954 to provide adequate educational opportunities for all its children and youth. A statement from Maryland.

**Lee:** I would not agree with that statement. I don't think that they did. Otherwise from what I'm understanding and from some people who are older than I am, the equipment wasn't adequate in the black schools. Not as adequate as they were in the white schools. And I guess at the time as a student there, I would not have realized that because I'm there as a student. But someone who had been an adult would know the difference, as to whether or not they had the same quality of books, the same quality of equipment for labs and that type of thing. So I would not agree with that statement.

**Grande:** Were you paid, or do you know if you were paid equal to your white colleagues with the same experience?

**Lee:** That I don't know. I would not have any idea.

**Grande:** Would you agree with Maryland's claim also in the [inaudible] brief, that it provided transportation for more than half of all colored elementary peoples, and for nearly three fourths of colored high school peoples in 1953?

**Lee:** I don't know about 1953, but I know they didn't do it in 1962 and all the years that I was in high school, for elementary school and also high school because I never rode a school bus, ever. From grades 1 to grade 12 in 1962 I never rode a school bus.

**Grande:** Would you agree also in the [inaudible] brief about the state's claim that in 1953 they spent 185 dollars on colored elementary peoples and 184 dollars on white elementary peoples?

**Lee:** I don't know the statistics, but my gut feeling would be that I don't think that did happen.

**Grande:** From your experiences, would you agree with the state's claim that the average size for colored elementary school classes was 32, average size class in an elementary colored school is 32? Or high school 21? Why or why not do you agree with the statement?

**Lee:** I'm trying to remember the classes that I was in in elementary school and whether there were 32 students there. I really don't think there were 32. I think it was less. But we had two classes in one room but I don't think there were that many. One teacher. She went from one side to the other, one teacher. That's two classes there, but I don't think there were more than 32 in it. I really don't recall that, that there were more than 32. What was the question about the high?

**Grande:** The high schools had 21 students?

**Lee:** No, I was in classes with more than 21. Maybe not a lot more but I know there were more than 21 in there.

**Grande:** As a teacher were you given full and equal opportunities?

**Lee:** As far as I know, yes.

**Grande:** Because you are VP, as well?

**Lee:** Now?

**Grande:** Moving up through the ladder as you have in your 50 years of experience.

**Lee:** Okay, are you talking about as far as promotions are concerned, that type of thing? I think that I was given an opportunity to be promoted from teacher to Vice Principal. I know that there were some discrepancies as far as going any farther. As far as I interviewed for supervisor jobs a couple different times, and I did not get it, nor did any other black person that applied for it get it either. I don't know what the reasoning was, but I have some questions on that.

**Grande:** Were there opportunities for you as a teacher to move into the administrative side there for you as a female regardless?

**Lee:** At the beginning I never applied for a position as an administrator so I don't know about that, but I think it was with the changing of the superintendent, and when we got our first female superintendent in the county that the mode of thinking changed, and more females began to be considered for administrative positions at that point. That's when I came on board as an administrator. So I was given a good opportunity to be trained as an administrator and to have an

administrative job at that point, but I think that was more of the female thing as opposed to the black thing as far as promotions at that time.

**Grande:** How many years did you spend as a teacher, and how many years have you been an administrator?

**Lee:** I taught for 22 years and 15 years as an administrator.

**Grande:** All your teaching experience was at Bennett Middle?

**Lee:** All of it was at Bennett Middle, other than when I taught Adult Ed, then it was at Wi Middle. Also when I taught Summer School it was mixed with that. Right now, I teach on Saturdays with the Upper Bound program down at UMES. But the bulk of my teaching experience was at Bennett Junior.

**Grande:** You taught english what grade?

**Lee:** I taught english grade 7 and 8. I also taught the Gate classes. Actua;ly I wrote the Gate curriculum when it first came about, and that was a mixture of U.S. History and English and I taught both.

**Grande:** Was all your administrative experience here at Parkside or were you somewhere else?

**Lee:** Two years I was at Bennett Middle. The rest of it I was at Parkside.

**Grande:** Were there any color restrictions concerning membership in the Maryland State Teachers Association? Because in the [inaudible] brief, the state of Maryland said that there were not. Do you know if you were able to join the Teachers Union early on in your career?

**Lee:** Oh yeah. There were no problems.

**Grande:** With your experiences as a student and teacher, would you agree with the state's claim that they provided adequate provisions for building, equipment, materials of instruction for every child in the state regardless of color? Why or why not?

**Lee:** Would you repeat that?

**Grande:** With your experiences as a student and then as a teacher, would you agree with the state of Maryland's claim in [inaudible] brief that they provided adequate provisions for buildings, equipment, materials of instruction for every child in the state regardless of color?

**Lee:** I guess I could agree if you're using the word adequate. That's the key word. I'm not saying that they were equal, but we did say that they were adequate. So I guess I would have to agree with that.

**Grande:** What is the biggest changes you've seen in education from when you were in school to when your daughter was in school?

**Lee:** My daughter right now is 23. When I was in school, we didn't have all of the opportunities to advance. Certainly we didn't have computers, nothing was computerized at that point when I was in high school. We did do some labs, but nothing as we have today and when my daughter was in school. I think that my daughter has a greater field of knowledge than I had. But she had a greater field of knowledge than I had, as far as being able to go out and do an internship someplace, being able to know all there is to know about computers, surfing the web and all that type of thing. Right now, there is a vast amount of knowledge students can get if they take advantage of it. But when I was in school we had the books, and that was pretty much it we had the books and our teacher. And that's what we depended on.

**Grande:** Do you feel that educational opportunities were much more wider? In terms of you having to pay for college you had to promise that you would teach for 2 years. In terms of her, she might have had more opportunities that you did in terms of picking a field or profession.

**Lee:** Yes, years ago, the field were pretty much [inaudible]. You'd be a teacher or you'd be a nurse. You had to have things open up like engineering and journalism and all that type of stuff that they have today. The fields of opportunity were very limited when I was in school. Now they are wide open and students can do pretty much whatever they want to do. Now I'm not saying that the finances are there. It was better for me financially because they did have some opportunities and plans that I could go to school and I didn't have to actually put out all that money. Now they don't actually have that unless you get top 2 or 3 in your class to get the scholarship, but for a student that's a good student, money is not there for them. You have a B student that comes out, the money is not gonna be there for them at all. They're gonna have to get some loans or parents are gonna have to pay or whatever. So I don't think financially that they're better off than I was at that time.

**Grande:** Is there anything you feel that we've left out that you would like to add to the interview?

**Lee:** No, I think you've covered everything I believe. To add to what I've said, when I was in high school, and when I graduated in 1962, most of the students that graduated with me pretty much knew that you were going to an all black college. And if you were gonna teach, you would

have to teach at a black high school. If you were gonna stay in this area you know that you were gonna go to either Salisbury High School, or Somerset High School which was in Princess Anne, I'm not sure which one they had in [inaudible] County. But you had to go black high school, they had not integrated yet, so if you were gonna teach that's what you would do. Or you could be worse, and if you were gonna be a nurse, I think most of them went to Mercy Hospital in Baltimore. Actually that's where I was headed to begin with, was going to Mercy School, and it was a toss up between that and whether I wanted to go to college or not. College won out, and I'm glad, I'm not sorry for that. But the opportunities were actually limited, but today they're not limited for young people today.

**Random Voice:** So there was no training for any medical or nursing aspirants here in Wicomico County?

**Lee:** Are you talking about in the high schools?

**Random Voice:** As far as regional I think they had a nursing program but did they admit blacks to that program?

**Lee:** I think they had one, and I think the answer to that is no. You would have to go to Baltimore. I'm not sure how open their program was or even how advanced their program was at that point, so I know that they had some type of school there, but black people did not go there. Black people didn't go to Salisbury State College right here in Salisbury, and I think it was called Salisbury [inaudible] School or something like that. But they didn't go right here so we had to go to Princess Anne. I could've walked to Salisbury State easily and could've gone to school at Salisbury State instead of having to go around the corner and thumb a ride all the way to Princess Anne everyday, back and forth. It would've been easier for me to walk from Fitzwater Street to Salisbury State, easy. So I would say that today, young people have a lot more opportunities than I had when I was a youngster. But I will say that what you do for the times that you're in, is to make the best of what you have at the time.

**End**